

Independent Democrat.

TERMS, \$3,

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In Advance.

Volume 1.

CANTON, MISSISSIPPI, SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 17, 1843.

Number 10.

The Independent Democrat.

IS EDITED AND PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

BY JOHN HANDY.

TERMS.—Three Dollars, invariably in advance. Persons wishing to discontinue will please give notice thereof in writing. No subscription received for a less time than six months.

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MARTHA WASHINGTON.

BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.

The state of society in Virginia, a century since, was quiet and imposing. The "Ancient Dominion" retained stronger features of resemblance to the fatherland than any of its sisters. The manners of the nobility of England had been transplanted, with but little radical change, to the territory of Powhatan. A kind of feudal magnificence, a high and quick sense of honor, a generous and lordly hospitality early characterized a State which has given to the Western Empire so many of its mightiest and noblest names.

One of the most immediate changes arising from the severance of the mother country, was the breaking down of that courtly and almost solemn etiquette which marked the intercourse of the higher classes. "I know your age by the edition of your manners," said a lady of discernment to a gentleman distinguished for politeness. "I am certain that you were educated before the Revolution." But the republicanism which may possibly have swept too full a tide over our national manners, had, at that period of which we speak, no existence in Virginia. The levees of her royal governors, though stripped of monarchical pomp, displayed a remnant of those stately trappings of chivalry, with which the titled and valiant of a still earlier age, were accustomed, in European courts, to pay homage to beauty and rank.

It was early in the winter of 1748 that the levees of Governor Gooch opened with untroubled splendor at Williamsburg. Many of the members of assembly took thither with them a part of their families, and his season was graced by the presence of several young high-born maidens, who had never before been presented at court. One among these was evidently the theme of general admiration. Some of the stately matrons criticised her as deficient in height. But, though somewhat beneath the middle stature, she possessed the round and exquisite symmetry which the earlier historians have ascribed to the fascinating Anne Boleyn. A pure complexion, and clear eyes, were finely contrasted with dark, glossy, and redundant hair. Still it was found difficult, by common observers, to analyze her beauty; for it rested not on any permanent gift, but on the consent of the whole person in loveliness. Grace of movement, and melody of voice, were conceded to be among its elements. More animation was hers, than is wont to distinguish the modern Southern beauty; but that chiefly won old and young, was a cheerfulness, the silent history of the soul's happiness, and an expressive smile, inspiring every beholder with confidence, as a beam from the temple of truth.

Though she had scarcely numbered three or four summers, there was about her womanly dignity which chastened former admiration into respect. Among those who had paid their devoirs to this lovely young creature was Colonel Custis, one of the most accomplished gentlemen of his time. His father, the Hon. John Custis of Arlington, held the office of Kings' councillor, and was a man of wealth and distinction. His attendance at Williamsburg during the present session, had been somewhat interrupted by illness; and while there, the graver duties of the statesman had so far absorbed him, as to render him ignorant as to what was passing in the social circles of the city. Not long after the suspension of his duties, and the return of the burgesses to their homes, to counsel requested a conversation in his cabinet with his son-in-law, Daniel Parke Custis. There was regular mixture of gravity and candor in his manner as he desired him to be seated, and thus opened the discourse.

"Have you sometime wished to see you on an interesting subject? Though still young, you have arrived at years of discretion."

"I am about to give another proof of it. In short, I wish to turn your attention to a suitable marriage."

The Colonel bowed. "You know Colonel Byrd, of Westover, to be my particular friend. His daughter is one of the most beautiful accomplished ladies in Virginia. It is my desire that you form with her a matrimonial alliance."

"My dear sir, I have not the vanity of supposing that I could render myself acceptable to Miss Byrd."

"No objection on that head. Her father and myself have settled it. Indeed, I may as well tell you that we have had numerous conversations on this business, and that you have both been as betrothed as from the cradle. Think, my son, of the advantage of such a connection, the continuity of wealth and power that will ultimately pass into your hands."

"Affection, sir, seems to me to be the only bond that can hallow such a union. Not even my reverence for the best of fathers could induce me to enter into it from mercenary motives."

"Mercenary, sir, mercenary! whoever before dared to couple that word with my name!" exclaimed the counsellor, raising himself to his full height, and fixing a kindling eye upon his son.

Then pacing the apartment a few turns, he stopped opposite to him, and added:

"You speak of the affection that should precede marriage. Have the goodness to understand that the misplacing of yours may materially affect your patrimonial inheritance." He seemed to wait for a reply but in vain. "May I inquire if you have thus early presumed to decide seriously on the preference of any young lady as a companion for life?"

"I have, sir."

"May I be favored with a knowledge of her name?"

"Miss Martha Darnbridge."

The high-spirited gentleman parted in mutual resentment; but the reflections of a night restored them to better feelings. The father began to excuse the son, by recalling the warmth of his own early attachment; while the son referred the testiness of the father to the harrowing disappointment to a long-cherished plan, and the querulousness of his feeble health. Still, as it usually happens with proud men, neither would open his heart to the other, and a slight, though almost imperceptible coldness gathered over their intercourse. But this interview served as a stimulant to matrimony. The temporary reserve of the father, throwing something like gloom over the paternal mansion, heightened the frequency of the visits of the lover. The gentle object of his preference imagined no barrier to an alliance, where there existed no inequality; and he forbore to communicate what could only occasion perplexity, and what he trusted would soon vanish like the baseless fabric of a dream.

According to a happy prescience, the lofty counsellor gave his consent to the nuptials, and the flour of the court of Williamsburg became a bride in the blush of her seventeenth summer.

Their residence was a retired and romantic mansion on the banks of the Pamunkey. It reared its white walls amid a profusion of vines and flowering trees. Broad plantations, and the wealth of Virginia forests, variegated the grounds. Rural occupation, and the delight of each other's society, prepared for them what they deemed a paradise. In visits to their favored dwelling, the chancellor learned to appreciate the treasures of his new daughter. Her excellence in the responsible sphere to which she was introduced won his regard; and with the ingenuousness of an honorable mind when convinced of an error, he sought every opportunity of distinguishing her merit, which he had once been reluctant to admit. When he saw the grave and courtliness with which she maintained a general hospitality; the judgment, far beyond her years, displayed in the management of her servants; the energy, the early rising, the cheerful alacrity with which she regulated and beautified the internal mechanism of her family; the disinterestedness with which she forgot herself, and sought the good of others; but above all, the untiring devotion to her husband, and the little ones sprung up around her, he gloried in the sentiment of his son, which, indeed, he had always believed, though he was once in danger of swerving from it, that strong personal affection is essential to the bias of matrimonial affection.

But the scenes of exquisite felicity was not long to last. The death of her two oldest children prepared her for a deep loss in her beloved and estimable husband. In the trying situation of a young, beautiful and wealthy widow, and mother, she was still able to conduct herself with unvarying discretion, and faithfully to discharge every important duty.

It was in the spring of 1758 that two gentlemen attended by a servant, were seen riding through the luxuriant scenery with which the country of New Kent, in Virginia abounds. The most striking figure of the group was a tall graceful man, and apparently about twenty-five or twenty-six years of age. He would have been a model for a statue when Rome was in her best days. His companion was an elderly man in a plain garb, who, by the

military with which he pointed out surrounding objects, would seem to be taking his daily rounds upon his own estate. As they approached the avenue to an antique mansion, he placed his hand on the rein of his companion.

"Nay, Colonel Washington, let it never be said that you passed the house of your father's friend without dismounting. I must insist on the honor of delaying you as my guest."

"Thanks to you, my dear sir, but I ride in haste, the bearer of dispatches to our Governor in Williamsburg, which may not brook delay."

"Is this the noble steed which was given you by the dying Braddock on the fatal field of Monongahela? And this the same servant he bequeathed you at the same time?"

Washington answered in the affirmative.

"Then, my dear Colonel, this mounted and attended you may well dine with me, and by borrowing some of this fine moonlight, reach Williamsburg ere his excellency shall have shaken off his morning slumbers."

"Do I understand that I may be excused immediately after dinner?"

"Certainly."

"Then, sir, I accept your hospitality," and gracefully throwing himself from the charger, he resigned the reign to the English servant, giving at the same time strict orders as to the time when he must be ready with the horses to pursue their journey.

"I am rejoiced Col. Washington," said the hospitable old gentleman, "fortunately to have met you on my morning ride; and more so as I have some guests who may make the repast pass pleasantly, and will not fail to appreciate our young and valiant soldier."

Washington bowed his thanks, and was introduced to the company. Virginia's far-famed hospitality was well set forth in that spacious baronial hall. Precise in his household regulations, the social feast was closed at the time the host had predicted. The servant also was punctual—he knew the habits of his master. At the appointed moment he stood with horses accompanied at the gate; and much did he marvel, as listening to every footstep that paced down the avenue, he saw the son-in-law in the west, and yet no master appear. At length an order came that the horses should be put up for the night. Wonder upon wonder! when his business with the governor was so urgent! The sun was high in the heaven the next day ere Washington mounted for his journey—no explanation was given, but it was rumored that among the guests was a beautiful and youthful widow, to whose charms his heart responded. This was further confirmed by his tarrying but a brief space at Williamsburg, retracing his route with unusual celerity, and became a frequent visitor of the house of the late Colonel Custis, in the vicinity, where, the following year, his nuptials were celebrated.

Henceforth the life of the lady of Mount Vernon is a part of the history of her country. In that hallowed retreat she was found entering into the plans of Washington, sharing his confidence, and making his household happy. There, her only daughter, Martha Custis, died in the bloom of youth; a few years after, when the troubles of the country drew her husband to the post of commander-in-chief of her armies, she accompanied him to Boston, and witnessed his siege and evacuation. For eight years he returned no more to enjoy his beloved residence on the banks of the Potomac. During his absence she made the most strenuous efforts to discharge the added weight of care, and to endure, with changing trust in heaven, continued anxiety for one so inexpressibly dear. At the close of each campaign she repaired, in compliance with his wishes, to head quarters, where the ladies of the general-officer joined her in forming such society as diffused a cheering influence over even the gloom of the winter of Valley Forge and Morristown. The opening of every campaign was the signal of the return of Lady Washington (as she was called in the army) to her domestic cares at Mount Vernon. "Heard," said she, "the first and last cannon of the revolutionary war." The rejoicing which attended the surrender of Cornwallis, in the autumn of 1781, marked for her a season of the deepest sorrow. Her only remaining child, Col. John Custis, the aid-de-camp of Washington, became during his arduous duties at the siege of Yorktown, the victim of epidemic fever, and died at the age of twenty-seven. He was but a boy of five at the time of her second marriage, and had drawn forth strongly the affections and regard of her illustrious husband, who shared her affection for his loss, and by the tenderest sympathies sought to alleviate it.

After the close of the war, a few years was devoted to the enjoyment and embellishment of their favorite Mount Vernon. The peace and returning prosperity of their country gave pure and bright ingredients to their cup of happiness. Their mansion was thronged with guests of distinction, all of whom remarked with admiration the energy of Mrs. Washington in the complicated duties of a Virginia housewife, and the elegance and grace with which she presided at her noble board.

The voice of a free nation, conferring in General Washington the highest office in its power to bestow, was not obeyed without a sacrifice of feeling. It was in the spring of 1789, that, with his lady, he bade adieu to his tranquil abode, to resume the responsibility of the first Presidency. In forming his domestic establishment, he mingled the simplicity of a republic with that dignity which he felt was necessary to secure the respect of older governments. The furniture of his house, the livery of his servants, the entertainment of his guests displayed elegance, while they rejected ostentation. In all these arrangements, Mrs. Washington was a second self. Her Friday evening levees at which he was always present exhibited that perfect etiquette which marks the intercourse of the dignified and high bred. Commencing at seven and closing at ten they lent no more sanction to late hours than to levity. The first lady of the nation still preserved the habits of early life. Indulging in no indolence, she left the pillow at dawn, and after breakfast retired to her chamber for an hour, for the study of the scriptures and devotion. "This practice, it is said, during the long period of half a century, was never omitted. The duties of the sabbath were dear to her. The President and herself attended public worship with regularity, and in the evening he read to her, in her chamber, the scriptures and a sermon. The spring of 1797 opened for them with the most pleasing anticipations. The cares of high office were resigned, and they were about to retire, for the remainder of their days, to the beloved shades of Mount Vernon. The new turf springing into fresh greenness wherever they trod, the vernal blossoms opening to receive them, the wadded welcome of the birds were never more dear, as wearied with the toils of public life, and satiated with its honors they returned to their rural retreat, followed by the recollections of early years, and by the consciousness of virtue.

But in two years Washington was no more. The shock of his death, after an illness of only twenty-four hours, fell like a thunder-bolt upon the bereaved widow. The piety which had long been her strength, and which she supported, but her heart dropped; and though her cheerful disposition did not utterly forsake her, she discharged her habitual round of duties, as one who felt that the glory had departed. How beautiful and characteristic was her bereavement, the solicitation of the highest authority of the nation, that the remains of her illustrious husband might be removed to the seat of government, and a marble monument erected to mark the spot of their repose.

"Taught by the great example which I have had so long before me, never to expose my private wishes to the will of my country, I consent to the request made by Congress; and doing this I need not, I fear, say what a sacrifice of individual feeling I make to a sense of public duty."

The intention of the Congress of 1797 has never been executed, nor the proposed monument erected. The enthusiasm of the time passed away, and the many conflicting cares of a great nation turned its thought from thus perpetuating his memory, whose image is trusted, would be ever enshrined in the hearts of a great people.

Scarcely two years of her lonely widowhood were accomplished, ere the lady of Mount Vernon found death approaching. Gathering her family around her, she impressed on them the value of that religion which she had tested from her youth onward to hoary hairs. Then calmly resigned her soul into the hands of him who gave it, at the age of seventy, full of years and full of honors, she was laid in the tomb of Washington.

In the outline of the linaments of Martha Washington, we perceive that it was neither the beauty, with which she was endowed, nor the high station which she had attained, that gave enduring lustre to her character, but her Christian fidelity in those duties which devolve upon her sex. This fitted her to irradiate the home, to lighten the cares, to cheer the anxieties, to subliminate the enjoyments of him, who, in the expressive language of the Chief Justice Marshall, was "so favored of Heaven as to depart without exhibiting the weakness of humanity."

[From the Nashville Union.]
WHIG RECKLESSNESS.
The Nashville Whig of yesterday in a labored and reckless effort to bewilder the public with regard to the expenditures of the Federal Government, charges Gov. Polk with going through "a wild combination of figures, destined to mislead it not to confuse his readers." This is precisely what the whigs do, and what Gov. Jones has done. Nothing can be more palpable than that the whigs have wantonly increased the expenditures, diminished the revenue, and added at the lowest estimate about twenty millions of dollars to the public debt. We do not wonder that to escape condemnation for their extravagance, these unprincipled parties should seek to delude the people and conceal the truth by mystification and wild

combinations of figures, and by throwing the subject into as much confusion as possible, but it is matter of special wonder that the Governor of Tennessee should out-demagogue the most desperate and reckless of his partisan presses. It is strange that he, an aspiring man, should set so light a value on his own reputation as to make statement so destitute of truth, so easily discovered, and which his competitor has so plainly and fully exposed in the address which follows. Intelligent and honest men of Gov. Jones' own party must surely be ashamed of the mode of argument and recklessness of assertion which he has deemed necessary to adopt to conceal from the people the stubborn fact that the whigs have violated pledges and increased the expenditures and debt without good reason or excuse.

The whig leaders do not present their "facts and figures" ignorantly. The records are too plain to allow the supposition that they are deceived. They do it to throw the whole subject into confusion; to blind and bewilder the people. They seem to think that refutation may not find out and follow misrepresentation in all places where it has been scattered; and that by falsifying records themselves and falsely charging their opponents with doing the same thing, they may throw the whole subject into such confusion that the honest inquirer after truth may be so bewildered as not to know what to believe.

To such, however, we recommend a careful perusal of both addresses; and to all unprejudiced whigs, we especially commend the following brief notice of some of Gov. Jones' palpable misrepresentations.

FAYETTEVILLE, May 25, 1843.
TO THE PEOPLE OF TENNESSEE.

The publication of Gov. Jones, which appeared in the Nashville Whig of the 20th inst., reached me at Pulaski, and through the midst of the canvass, and with but little opportunity to review and expose the palpable fallacies, as well as the errors of fact and of argument which it contains—I have yet time enough to call the attention of my competitor, and the public to a few of the most prominent of them.

In referring to my competitor, and to should publish our respective opinions and views as to the public expenditures, I was actuated by a hope that he would present a clear and unambiguous statement which would enable the people to ascertain the exact truth as to the points about which we differed. In this hope I have been disappointed. If he had sought to involve the subject in still more confusion, than he had done in his speeches, he could not have done it more successfully than he has in his attempts to make it clear. But still one material point has been gained:—The people can now have the benefit of my competitor's "facts and figures"—and by reference to the authentic documents as presented in my communication of the 18th inst., they can determine whether they show an effort to elucidate the points in controversy, or to mystify and evade the force of my charge, that the Whig Congress have violated their pledge to reduce the expenditures.

I shall be necessarily brief in directing in directing the public attention to some of the most important errors in his Address, connected with the expenditures.

He relies upon the celebrated House Document No. 31 for his figures. It is a Report made by a member of a Whig Committee, at the Extra Session of Congress of 1841. From that document he quotes from one column of figures, showing that during the four years of Mr. Van Buren's administration, the "aggregate Expenditures" were 141,585,320 16.—He says that "this statement includes the expenditures for the redemption of Treasury notes and Trust Funds;" but he does not give the amount. By reference to another column of the same Document, No. 31 under the heads Payments on account of "Trust Funds, Treasury notes, interest, &c." he must have known that during Mr. Van Buren's four year he paid for redemption of Treasury Notes, Trust Funds &c., thirty millions five hundred and ninety seven thousand eight hundred and forty eight dollars and sixty three cents, leaving \$110,987,471 53, instead of 112,395,865 as stated by my competitor, as taken, as he states, from another document. This is an error of \$1,408,393 47 in my competitor's "figures," if his celebrated House Document No. 31 is a reliable paper.

My competitor says that he does not admit that Mr. Van Buren's administration is entitled to a credit for the redemption of Treasury notes, and the paying out of Trust funds. I am not aware that any other public man has ever before doubted the justice of these credits. To show the flagrant injustice of denying these credits, it is only necessary for me to state, that the administration is first charged with all the expenditures which rendered it necessary to issue Treasury notes and afterwards as these Treasury notes were redeemed and paid off, they are again charged the second time as additional expenditures. Yet my competitor insists that Mr. Van Buren's administration ought to be thus charged twice for the same expenditures. The injustice of denying the credits

for Trust funds paid out is not less flagrant. The Trust funds are moneys received into the Treasury from foreign nations as indemnities, &c. for our own citizens, and have been paid out to their own citizens, and moneys belonging to the Chickasaws and other Indian tribes held and paid out for their use and benefit. The moneys never belonged to our Treasury, were not derived from any of our sources of revenue, but were received in Trust and handed over to those for whom they were received. Yet my competitor will not admit that they are just credits. I am sure an intelligent people will admit the justice of these credits.

I have shown from my competitor's House Document No. 31 that the Public Expenditures, exclusive of Treasury notes redeemed, and Trust funds, during Mr. Van Buren's administration, were \$110,987,471 53. If my competitor had been anxious to give the people full information on this subject, he would have stated, that in this latter amount is included all those expenditures of extraordinary purposes which were necessary during Mr. Van Buren's administration, but which have since ceased to be heavy drains upon the Treasury. To have treated the subject fairly, my competitor should have stated that there was expended during the first three years of Mr. Van Buren's administration, in the suppression of Indian hostilities, the Florida war, &c., the sum of \$13,717,317. In the purchase of Indian lands, and in the removal of the Indians \$795,828, and in erecting permanent fire proof Public buildings \$83,520,624, these three items alone making \$26,030,767. He might also have stated, as the fact is, that all the appropriations made for these purposes, were made with the consent and approbation of his whig friends in Congress.

Until it can be shown that it was wrong to protect our women and children in Florida from savage butchery—to extinguish the Indian title to lands and to remove the Indians beyond the Mississippi, and to provide durable and safe public buildings, it must be conceded that this amount of \$26,030,624 expended for these objects by Mr. Van Buren during the first three years of his administration, is not to be deducted from the ordinary expenditures of these years.

The aggregate sums expended during these years, deducting Treasury Notes redeemed and Trust Funds, as appears by my competitor's same celebrated document, No. 31, were as follows, viz:

	For 1837,	\$31,610,003 09
For 1838,	31,544,396 19	
For 1839,	25,443,716 94	
	\$88,598,116 22	

Take from this aggregate expenditure for these three years, the sum expended for the suppression of Indian hostilities, the purchase of Indian lands, removal of Indians and the erection of durable public buildings, being extraordinary expenditures, as shown above 26,030,624 00

Making the aggregate ordinary expenditures for these years \$62,567,492 22

Being for each year an average annual expenditure of \$20,849,556 43. This is less by more than five millions than the Whig expenditure for 1841, and less by near three millions than their expenditure for 1842.

My competitor was compelled to admit in his speeches at Lawrenceburg and Pulaski, that the ordinary expenditures of 1840 were less than the ordinary expenditures of 1841 or 1842—and it must now be manifest to the public that the ordinary expenditures for 1837, 1838 and 1839 were, after making the proper deductions which I have made, also less than the ordinary expenditures of 1841 and 1842.

But I have yet to point out a still more glaring error in the address of my competitor. He institutes a comparison between the first three years of the late and present administrations, and says—"Placing the comparison on an equal footing, the entire expenditure of the first three years of Mr. Van Buren against the entire expenditure of the three years in which the Whigs have commanded a majority in Congress, and the result will be as follows:"

	Van Buren.	Whig.
1837	\$37,265,037	1841 \$26,398,995
1838	39,455,438	1842 21,603,784
1839	37,614,936	1843 18,175,289
	\$110,335,411	\$66,178,068

This statement professes to give the entire expenditure for both periods of three years. Does it in fact give the entire expenditure? It does not. It includes for the years 1837, 1838 and 1839, the Treasury Notes redeemed, Trust Funds, &c., and it excludes and deducts the same items from the expenditures of 1841, 1842, and 1843. It falls short of the "entire expenditures" during the first two years 1841 and 1842, fourteen millions seven hundred and eighty thousand two hundred and sixty-one dollars and sixty-one cents, as will be seen, by reference to an official statement from the Treasury bearing date February 8th, 1845, and for the third year, 1843, it falls short just the amount of Treasury Notes, interest on public debt and Trust Funds which shall be paid out during 1843, an amount not now ascertained; but if it shall be equal to the

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